

CHAPTER

9

Other Travel Modes

This chapter summarizes the availability and use of other travel modes in West Linn such as rail, interstate bus, air, water, freight and pipeline.

Rail transportation

No rail services are currently provided to the City of West Linn. Oregon City is provided service by the Southern Pacific Railroad, which runs parallel to Highway 99E.

The closest rail passenger service is provided by AMTRAK, with a stop in downtown Portland at the Union Station. A South-North light-rail system has been proposed to extend to Oregon City. A future high-speed rail system in the Willamette Valley is currently being discussed. This rail line would most likely link Salem with Portland, and perhaps head north to Vancouver, British Columbia.

Needs and Deficiencies

Travel time on existing transit service to the AMTRAK can be long for the West Linn resident. If either of the new rail systems currently being discussed become a reality, West Linn residents would need access to these facilities by all appropriate modes.

Recommended Improvements

Given West Linn's current density and the urban form of the Portland metropolitan area, it is unlikely that passenger rail transportation will come directly to the City of West Linn. It is recommended that residents continue to use the services and facilities in the Portland area. Potential improvements in service exist with the expansion of regional systems currently being discussed. West Linn should continue to support and promote regional improvements to the transit system, and be actively involved in the coordination of these services and possible connecting services to best serve its residents. As the details of these systems and potential connecting points are not yet known, it is not possible to incorporate them into existing plans and facility improvements. West Linn should advocate for good connections from the city to future passenger rail stations.

Interstate Bus Transportation

Interstate bus service is available from downtown Portland at the Greyhound station. West Linn residents can reach this station either by private automobile or by the Route 35 Tri-Met line. Greyhound does not currently operate any suburban bus stations near West Linn.

Needs and Deficiencies

Same for West Linn residents as with the AMTRAK train service.

Recommended Improvements

If market conditions warrant, Greyhound or another interstate bus service would serve West Linn residents better with a suburban station south of Portland. Oregon City used to have an interstate bus station, and West Linn would recommend re-activating this facility. However, a decision to provide such a station would be market-oriented since inter-city bus service providers are private corporations.

Air Transportation

Domestic and international air passenger service is provided at the Portland International Airport, approximately 20 miles from West Linn. On-demand taxi service provides service to the airport. The General Aviation Airport in Aurora also serves the needs of West Linn residents. Some of the local airports open to the public for private aircraft in the area include Happy Valley, Oregon City, Mulino and Canby.

Needs and Deficiencies

Access to the Portland Airport can be hampered by traffic congestion on I-205, the most direct and commonly used route to the airport. Transit service, which involves transferring in Portland, is a time-consuming and indirect way to access the Portland Airport.

Proposed Improvements

West Linn residents are encouraged to continue to use the services and facilities available at the Portland Metropolitan Airport and at the General Aviation Airport in Aurora. As air will continue to grow as a popular and efficient form of transportation, it is important that West Linn residents have a convenient and reliable method for getting to the airports. Although I-205 provides direct access to the Portland Airport, increasing traffic makes its reliability questionable. The City of West Linn needs to petition and support ODOT in their efforts to improve flow on this important link with capital improvements, and with traffic management efforts.

Water Transportation

West Linn lies along the west side of the Willamette River. The Willamette Falls Locks, operated by the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, are a part of the water-borne transportation system through West Linn. The locks are on the National Register of Historic Places. The channel is maintained to a depth of eight feet and 150-foot width between Cedar Island and Oregon City (200-foot width to Portland). This passageway is used by both commercial and recreational boats.

Needs and Deficiencies

The locks and river do not currently provide transportation alternatives to the West Linn resident. The potential for river taxis and ferries should be examined in the future.

Proposed Improvements

As the City recognizes the river and locks as an efficient mode of transportation for commercial traffic, land use decisions and policy development concerning the locks and riverfront should promote the continued use of these facilities.

Use of the river to transport people, either by river taxi or a ferry is a concept West Linn residents have suggested and are open to. The provision of such services is market-driven and will not be provided by a private company until it becomes economically viable. As the implementation of this type of service would require an immense capital undertaking, it would not be fiscally responsible for the City to undertake such a project. However, because river taxis and ferries offer potential transportation alternatives, future policy and land use decisions should protect and promote their use in the future by allowing for landing and docking sites.

Freight and Goods Movement

Freight movement within the City of West Linn consists of 1) the delivery of goods to commercial sites along Highway 43, 2) freight movement associated with the West Linn Paper plant, and 3) commercial freight traffic going through West Linn to other destinations on I-205 and Highway 43.

Needs and Deficiencies

The considerable truck traffic on I-205 combined with the lack of truck climbing lanes and short merging distances between ramps, often results in conflicts between automobiles and truck traffic, and slows traffic flow near the West Linn (Highway 43)/I-205 interchange.

Proposed Improvements

The two routes within West Linn most used for freight movement by truck are I-205 and Highway 43, both under the jurisdiction of the Oregon Department of Transportation. It is recommended that the state monitor the traffic and accident patterns along I-205, especially in the vicinity of the Highway 43 interchange.

Highway 43, which extends from Gibbs Street in Portland to Main Street in Oregon City, is a multi-modal major arterial, designed to accommodate the movement of people and goods in and around the region. The Draft Interim Corridor Strategy is dedicated to ensuring adequate access to I-205 from the corridor and to removing future bottlenecks at this location. It is recommended that West Linn continue to be involved in this corridor study and in the development of appropriate plans to improve goods movement in the corridor. West Linn should encourage measures which result in non-local freight trips bypassing Highway 43.

Pipeline

There are no pipelines transporting commodities in West Linn except those used in the West Linn Paper Company industrial complex, and pipelines from the Smurfit Paper Mill in Oregon City to settling ponds along the Willamette River in West Linn. A sewage force main that is part of the Tri-City Sewerage District facility crosses the Willamette River. Several Northwest Natural Gas mains run through West Linn. Also, the South Fork Water Board has a potable water pipeline across the Willamette River serving West Linn.

Needs and Deficiencies

There are currently no needs and deficiencies identified.

Proposed Improvements

West Linn should remain open to increased transmission through pipelines and utility ducts, particularly to carry communication cables needed to meet the increasing demand of technology. Any improvements that can enable residents to work and carry out business from their homes will help alleviate the demand on the city's road system.